

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
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R 162111Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4179
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BELIZE
USUN 512
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
USCINCSO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GUATEMALA 8413

E.O. 11652 NA
TAGS: GT, BH, CU, PBOR, PFOR
SUBJ: GUATEMALA'S POSITION ON PANAMA AND BELIZE/CUBA

REF: GUATEMALA 7296

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. SUMMARY. IN PRESS STATEMENT
GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER REITERATED GUATEMALA'S POSITION
OF LOW-KEY SUPPORT FOR PANAMA IN THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS
AND ALSO MINIMIZED PROBABILITY THAT CUBANS HAVE SURREPTI-
CIOUSLY ENTERED BELIZE. LATTER STATEMENT CONTRASTED WITH
RECENT ALLEGATION BY GUATEMALAN VICE-PRESIDENT THAT CUBAN
AGENTS MAY ALREADY BE IN BELIZE. END SUMMARY.

2. GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA IN PRESS INTERVIEW
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DEC 14 STATED THAT, "GUATEMALA UNDERSTANDS PERFECTLY
PANAMA'S POSITON ON THE PROBLEM BECAUSE OF HER
LEGITIMATE POSITION ON THE CANAL ZONE WHICH IS BEING
NEGOTIATED WITH THE UNITED STATES, AND WE HOPE THAT A
JUST SOLUTION WILL BE FOUND IN AN AGREEMENT WITH THE
WASHINGTON GOVERNMENT; BUT IN THE INTERIM GUATEMALA

WILL MAINTAIN A POSITION OF NEUTRALITY BECAUSE OUR
RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES ARE CORDIAL".

3. ON SUBJECT OF POSSIBLE PRESENCE OF CUBANS IN
BELIZE MOLINA SAID, "...THERE ARE RUMORS; BUT IT HAS
NOT BEEN CONFIRMED THAT IT IS SO. HOWEVER, WE
REMEMEBER THAT THE BELIZEAN LEADERS HAVE DRAWN
MARKELY CLOSER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF FIDEL CASTRO.
THIS HAS LENT SUBSTANCE TO THE VIEW THAT EVENTUALLY
CASTROITE ELEMENTS WILL BE FOUND SURREPTITIUSLY IN
THE TERRITORY OF BELIZE". END CUNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH
GUATEMALA WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH PANAMA'S VOTE FOR
BELIZEAN INDEPENDENCE AT THE UNGA, IT CAN HARDLY
WITHDRAW ITS SUPPORT FOR PANAMA'S EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE
A NEW CANAL TREATY. THEREFORE, MOLINA HAS TAKEN THE
ONLY COURSE OPEN TO HIM, I.E. REITERATE THE LOW-KEY
NATURE OF THAT SUPPORT. IN HIS COMMENTS ON BELIZE,
WHICH UNLIKE THE PANAMA STATEMENT WERE CARRIED
BY ONLY ONE NEWSPAPER, MOLINA MAY HAVE BEEN TRYING TO
UNDERCUT VICE-PRESIDENT SANDOVAL, WHO RECENTLY
SUGGESTED THAT CUBAN AGENTS MAY ALREADY BE IN BELIZE
(REFTEL), WITHOUT APPEARING "SOFT ON CUBA" BY
DISCOUNTING THE IDEA COMPLETELY. IN ANY CASE, THIS
IS THE FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT BY A HIGH LEVEL GOG
SPOKESMAN IN RECENT MONTHS THAT THERE IS NO
CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF A CUBAN PRESENCE IN BELIZE.
NORMALLY, IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, MOST GOG OFFICIALS
(EXCLUDING MOLINA) REPEATEDLY ASSERT THAT BELIZE IS
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PENETRATED BY CUBAN AGENTS.
ANDREWS

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NNN

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